

(Washington, D.C.) – Because of the work of U.S. Representatives Rush Holt (NJ-12) and Patrick Murphy (PA-8), the House-passed bill funding the Department of Transportation in Fiscal Year 2010 could lead to significant discounts off the price of a peak fare ticket for commuters along Amtrak's Northeast Corridor. Originally, the bill included language that would have prohibited Amtrak from offering discounted fares to peak hour commuters along any of its routes. However, Holt and Murphy led an effort to strike the language and ensure that Amtrak can offer commuters a discounted fare. The funding bill next is expected to pass the Senate and then be signed into law by President Obama.

"This bill is good for commuters in New Jersey and along the Northeast Corridor who rely on Amtrak to get to work every day," Holt said. "It recognizes the need to make public transportation more affordable and more accessible, and surely will result in discounted Amtrak ticket rates."

"These fare increases have put more cars on our highways and forced our constituents to spend more time getting to and from work and less time at home with their families," Murphy said. "Our region is experiencing an economic revitalization. Increased rail service and lower fares for commuters will make Lower Bucks County even more attractive to families and businesses."

Since Fiscal Year 2006, the transportation bill has included language that prohibited Amtrak from using federal funding to support "any route on which Amtrak offers a discounted fare of more than 50 percent off the normal, peak fare." This report language has resulted in drastically higher prices – a 20 percent increase in fares – for regular commuters along the Northeast Corridor.

The Fiscal Year 2010 Transportation funding bill would provide \$1.6 billion to support the national passenger rail system. Additionally, the bill includes \$2.5 billion to provide grants to states or Amtrak for high speed or intercity passenger rail.